1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

854 mother are equally tender towards their child, as are also other male and female relatives. A man plays with his child for hours at a time, talking pure foolishness to the baby. One man was holding an infant who could not yet walk and telling her that by and by she would dance well, and that she would go into the bush and eat fruit from the trees. The reference to the infant's future is made laughingly and affectionately.

But this does not mean that the mother is not also an affectionate parent. As soon as she has returned from her garden she feeds the infant, and then it is her turn to fondle and play with him. When a woman holds a baby she usually balances herself first on one foot and then on the other, making a kind of rocking motion. She does this when she is nursing the child also.

The whole hamlet regards the youngest infant as its pet and plaything. Whenever there are a group of natives together, whether it is the women resting and chatting after their communal cooking, or the men idling on the sand, the child is tossed about from one to the other, fondled, patted, [201] jumped up and down, and kissed (a pressing of the lips to the body with a clucking noise, resembling more an imitation of biting). Or they may croon one of the dance songs 854 to the infant. Lullabies are the songs which accompany the 533 ritual dances. The music and words have been handed down from generation to generation, and the infant hears them from his father, his mother, his grandmother, his aunts, uncles, and all the rest of the family. One woman in the hamlet where I lived was in the habit of lying on her back while her sister's infant, not yet able to walk, stood on her chest. The woman swayed the baby rhythmically as she sang to her.

854 Although the infant is petted and fussed over by the whole community, he is remarkably unspoiled. The child cries when he is hungry and wants his mother's breast, but most

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

the child, but talks merely because he is considered a good orator.

The next ritual feast for the infant will be upon the appearance of his first tooth. For little Ongus, sometimes known as Ongus the second, so as not to confuse him with big Ongus, the chief, whose name he carries, a feast is held to mark this occasion. The host is Muhi, the baby's maternal grandmother's brother, a classificatory grandfather (*yaya*). He contributes the pig, the bananas, the tobacco, and the betel-nut. Taro is contributed by the mother of the child, and Brakko, Molung, and Pulong, all women of the opposite moiety from that of the infant, and of the same clan as his father. The latter, Peiwas, contributes bananas.

The affair is a rather small one, with only about twenty men and boys present. They are gathered in the compound, which was formerly the burial-ground for the hamlet of Panat, which has so shrunk in size that it now uses the cemetery of the next hamlet, Penguli, for burials. But the feasts of Panat are always held on its former burial-ground. Muhi is the host, and it is he who distributes the tobacco and betel-nut, real luxuries to the men. It is Ongas, the infant's father's mother's brother's son, who makes a short speech when they have almost finished eating. "We have come here because Ongus the second has a tooth. It is a very small feast, and there is not much food. Now we have finished." Only the men eat at this feast, the women, as usual, preparing the taro. I was told that if the child cutting its first tooth is female, the women, and not the men, would eat. As no female infant in my neighbourhood happened to cut her first tooth during my visit on the island, I was unable to observe the procedure.

Another ritual feast which may be held before the first tooth is cut, or a year or two after the teething stage, is that given for the possible mates of the child. The one I witnessed

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

881 A feast is held on the day of the ritual washing. The village
616 women of both moieties come, bringing their taro, to the hamlet where the girl lives, and there they prepare it to be baked in the *liga*. The girl herself is present, but does not help in the preparations. Then the women of the *Telenga* moiety give the food that they have brought and prepared to the women of the *Kongkong* moiety, and *vice versa*. The girl is given a bundle of taro specially prepared for her by her father's sister. If the girl is of the *Telenga* moiety, the *Telenga* women advance singing, carrying bundles of taro given to them by the *Kongkong* women, to the place where the girl is sitting and pile the food up in front of her. They sing:

[533]

Nama maagulip igitupmi
maresik weh weh
ngat amni tso ogaluna.[1]

The *Telenga* women then remain sitting by the girl near the pile of food contributed by the *Kongkong* women, who sit a short distance away by their pile of food given by the *Telenga* women. Each group eats a little, and then loads the remainder in their baskets to carry home, where the whole family get their share.

[565] This is one of the few ritual occasions which is dominated by the women. But the relationship of the girl to her father seems to be stressed at this time, as the women in discussing this matter with me always emphasized the fact that the women giving the food to the girl and the members of her moiety are of the same moiety as her father. Although the girl is betrothed and her wedding rites follow shortly, there is no mention that it is her future husband's moiety who is giving her taro.

841 Before describing the wedding rites which come some time during the next month, the subject of menstruation in

[198] [1] This I am unable to translate. Most of the songs of this people are in some obsolete and forgotten language, and they themselves do not know the meaning of the words.